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Announcing

The Second Annual Dreiser Essay Prize

The International Theodore Dreiser Society is pleased to announce the Second Annual Dreiser Essay Prize. The award is sponsored by the Dreiser Society and is given annually to the graduate student or untenured Assistant Professor who submits the best previously unpublished essay on any aspect of the work of the American writer Theodore Dreiser.

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Essays should follow MLA style. Applicants should not identify themselves on the essay but should instead provide their names, addresses (including email address), and "Dreiser Essay Prize Competition" on a separate cover page. Submit *three* copies of the essay by August 1, 2001, to

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2000 DREISER ESSAY PRIZE WINNER

Representing Grace Brown: The Working-Class Woman in "American Tragedy" Murder Narratives

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To situate representations of Grace ("Billie") Brown, the young factory worker allegedly murdered by Chester Gillette in the original 1906 "American Tragedy" trial, it is necessary to consider not only the depictions of her in the press at the time and later in Dreiser's novel, but also the cultural phenomena of "American Tragedy" murders. In addition, these constructions must be placed in an historical context, among the complex representations of working women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Representations of gender, class and women who worked did not remain fixed during this time period but were always being revised and contested, often by the women themselves. While most of the depictions of Brown in the courtroom and in the press include a recognizable middle-class, nineteenth-century model of femininity, Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* contests that model in significant ways. "American Tragedy" murder narratives, of which Dreiser's novel was the first, also show changes in representations of working women as the twentieth century progressed; in a recent retelling of the story the woman is no longer the victim but the perpetrator.

I. "AMERICAN TRAGEDY" MURDERS: "A CERTAIN TYPE OF CRIME" AS CULTURAL NARRATIVE

While little is known about Brown's actual subjectivity, much was constructed by the district attorney and the press during Gillette's trial. To locate these constructions, it is useful first to examine the phenomenon of "American Tragedy" murders and the narrative conven-

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tions they follow.

After Theodore Dreiser published *An American Tragedy* in 1925, he articulated his paradigm for a type of murder which he believed was endemic to American life. Drawing on his experience as a journalist, Dreiser concluded that these murders—called "American Tragedy" murders after his novel—were the result of a national preoccupation with achieving wealth and social position quickly. Dreiser's paradigm appeared often in representations of crime in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "American Tragedy" murders tell a story of a fruitless quest for social advancement and its bloody consequences—of the "American Dream" denied. While it has undergone numerous revisions, this narrative remains persuasive in courtrooms and in representations of crime in popular culture today. An example is the prosecution's contention in the 1995 trial of Susan Smith in Union, South Carolina, that Smith killed her two young sons in an attempt to marry the wealthy son of her employer and move upward on the social ladder.

"American Tragedy" narratives have not only influenced the decisions of juries and the resulting material consequences for the condemned, but they have also shaped, and been shaped by, relations of power in the culture from which they are drawn. Although ostensibly trials are held for the purpose of punishing transgressors and refixing, in public awareness, the boundaries of the social order, they also afford glimpses of the desires that must be suppressed to maintain that order. Dreiser's paradigm reveals upward mobility as an object of almost uncontrollable desire in twentieth-century America.

In his article "Proclaiming Trials as Narratives," Robert Weisberg proposes that "Certain ethical, political and legal values manifest themselves or operate only in the medium of narratives by which a culture or nation defines itself" (63). What, then, are the implications when a culture defines itself by American Tragedy murders? Masked in most versions of the story are tensions surrounding women's changing roles, both as producers in the workplace and as dependents and biological reproducers within the family structure. Moreover, defined in terms of this narrative, upward mobility is represented as worth killing for in America, where no ties of affection—not even maternal ones—are strong enough to bind this ambition. Conflicts of class, privilege, gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality periodically break into public awareness within American culture because of a murder and then are masked again, still unresolved. The legal system is portrayed as unable to address this violence adequately, lacking the narratives which would reveal the actual sources of the crimes.

In "I Find the Real American Tragedy," a long article published

serially in 1935, Dreiser described a particular kind of murder that had intrigued him for more than forty years:

> It seemed to spring from the fact that almost every young person was possessed of an ingrowing ambition to be somebody financially and socially. . . . In short, the general mental mood of America was directed toward escape from any form of poverty. . . . We bred the fortune hunter de luxe. Fortune-hunting became a disease . . . . (291-92)

Following publication of his novel, newspapers began to refer to similar cases as "American Tragedy" murders, as though they constituted a genre. They frequently invited Dreiser to comment on the cases. A recent example of this tradition is Richard Lingeman's 1990 *New York Times* article on the Charles Stuart case, in which Lingeman comments on the similarities between Stuart's crime and Clyde Griffiths's in Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. While this case is best known for Stuart's attempt to blame an unknown black assailant, he was himself convicted of murdering his upwardly-mobile wife. The prosecutor alleged that Stuart's wife had intended to divorce him, leaving him at a much lower income level. American Tragedy murders usually create a public demand for representations that exceed even the lengthy and dramatic media coverage afforded them; historian Craig Brandon notes that pictures of Grace Brown and Chester Gillette and other "souvenirs" of the murder were sold to the public during the Gillette/Brown trial in 1906. It is as though the repetition of the familiar tale both affirmed societal fears and soothed them.

From the Gillette/Brown trial in 1906 (and possibly before, if we accept Dreiser's analysis) through the present, then, the American Tragedy murder has appeared consistently in a variety of discourses, from representations in popular culture to courtroom narratives. Told from the perpetrator's point of view, it is a story about economic and social determinism and the bloody result when the "American Dream" is ruthlessly pursued. Told from the victim's point of view, it is a cautionary tale for young working-class women, an indictment of the morals of the privileged classes and of the dangers of working outside the home. Told and retold, American Tragedy murders are narratives about a society which fosters and promotes the national obsession with wealth and fame until it leads to murder. That the story has been so often retold is evidence of its persuasive power, its ability to convince listeners that, "Yes, that is how it is." The narrative both inscribes and reproduces societal definitions of what is just and for whom, what is dangerous and for whom; it invokes cultural anxieties and gives them closure. Thus, the enduring interest in "the story of Chester and Billie" and other American Tragedy narratives.

The American Tragedy murder both inscribes important gender codes and subverts them. While the subject (usually male) obeys the ideological mandate to desire—above all else—wealth, social position, and upward mobility, often through marriage, his career nevertheless ends in tragedy. His conforming to social norms is enabling, to some degree, but ultimately it enables his downfall. Men usually become murderers in the American Tragedy narrative, and women are murdered. The story presents, in part, the clash between the promise of upward mobility held out to men, especially white men, in an age when class boundaries were perceived as permeable, and the asymmetrical opportunities afforded women—particularly working class women—for the same kind of mobility. Social codes—the domestic and reproductive order—reinforced the conflict between the two.

In Dreiser's novel and in his paradigm, tragedy is precipitated by a conflict with a partner over incompatible ambitions. The poor woman desires a marriage which will ensure her upward mobility, but only men of her own class will consider her as a wife. Unable to find a suitable husband in her hometown, Roberta Alden, in *An American Tragedy*, moves to Lycurgus, where she is immediately attracted to the nephew of her employer. While Clyde Griffiths has only a slightly better social position than her own, she thinks he is ambitious and well connected and therefore might take her seriously as a marriage partner and perhaps provide a middle-class status in the future. But, in fact, "Mr. Striving," represented by Clyde in the novel, desires a marriage with a woman of the class he hopes to enter. In *An American Tragedy*, the upper-class woman, Sondra Finchley, would bring both wealth and social standing to the union; "Miss Poor" could not compete on this basis. Thus, in the American Tragedy paradigm, the poor woman's desires have very little potential for fulfillment, as gender codes dictate that they must be sought through marriage, a marriage which women of her class are unlikely to achieve. This places her in conflict with "Mr. Striving," an upwardly-mobile man of her own class whom she desires but by whom she is not desired.

American Tragedy narratives underscore a conflict exacerbated in the early twentieth century by the scarcity of birth control, which kept the reproductive order and its requisite female chastity firmly in place, and by the limited economic opportunities that gave women few chances of survival outside the patriarchal family. Roberta Alden's search for happiness ends at the bottom of Big Bittern Lake. Clyde Griffiths's attempt to abandon the woman of one class for the woman of another ends in his destruction by the class system whose codes he has internalized too well. As several critics have pointed out, the American Tragedy narrative takes the nineteenth-century myth created

by Horatio Alger and turns it upside down. It also subverts the "working girl" fiction of the same period, which promised women happiness through an upwardly-mobile marriage. Barrie Hayne writes, "The difference between *An American Tragedy* and the school of Horatio Alger lies in the degree of criticism to which the society itself is subjected, the extent to which it is actually blamed for the tragedy" (175).

II. REPRESENTING GRACE BROWN AND THE PROTOTYPICAL "AMERICAN TRAGEDY" MURDER

Representations of Grace Brown, the victim in the famous Gillette/Brown murder trial at the turn of the century, raise issues of both gender and class and the ways in which they intersect or diverge in American Tragedy narratives. District Attorney George W. Ward portrayed Brown as a pure and innocent country girl—a lamb—led astray by a lecherous, deceitful, and murderous wolf from a more privileged class. Other versions of the story depict Brown as a conventional young woman rebelling against sexual constraints, as in Dreiser's novel; as a victim of class warfare, in a 1936 Broadway play, *The Case of Clyde Griffiths*; and in 1951, as a neurotic "failed woman" who could not hold on to her man in Paramount's *A Place in the Sun*. Each of these versions appears to represent gender/class constructions of the times in which they were produced more clearly than they represent Brown's lived experience.

Grace Brown, a young factory worker in Cortland, New York, was drowned in Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks in July of 1906. Chester Gillette, her supervisor and a nephew of the owner of the skirt factory where she worked, was arrested and charged with her murder. An autopsy revealed Brown was pregnant at the time of her death, a fact which helped to create further public indignation toward Gillette. Gillette's trial generated a great deal of interest nationally, in part because it seemed to confirm some of the society's deepest fears surrounding the entry of large numbers of young women into the labor force.

As early as the 1830's, working-class women were the subject of various discourses—fictional, non-fictional, journalistic, and sociological—which articulated anxieties surrounding their exposure to men in the workplace. The threat to women was often constructed as sexual activity outside of marriage and the undermining of the patriarchal family structure. Underlying these anxieties was the fear of women's desire itself, though it was seldom depicted as uncontrolled; rather, the discourse of the nineteenth century tended to portray women as with-

out desire, the prey of lustful and unscrupulous males. An item in the *Factory Girls Album* of Exeter, N.H. (October 31, 1846), offered the following advice:

> A goodly proportion of those in large cities, who inhabit "dens of shame," are first initiated into this awful vice in manufacturing places. Soon after, most of them commence the downward road to destruction—they become known, and are compelled to leave the mills and emigrate to large cities. We repeat what we have often done—girls leave not your homes in the country. It will be better for you to stay at home on your father's farms than to run the risk of being ruined in a manufacturing village.—Man. Pal. (qtd. in Foner 27)

Philip Foner notes in *The Factory Girls*, from which the above excerpt was taken, that items in publications for "working girls" were ostensibly authored by the operatives themselves but were sometimes written by management, who used pseudonyms and attempted to shape their readers' views to those of the corporation (xx). "Man. Pal." can easily be read as "Man Pal," the workers' male friend; the writer would seem to be a male not only because of the pseudonym but also because of the assumption that young women were necessarily leaving home by choice, an error that a woman worker would be unlikely to make. Here the anxiety surrounding women's introduction to unsupervised sexuality is clear. Once unleashed, such desire can only lead to prostitution. The probable end of a woman "initiated into this awful vice" is sternly described. Grace Brown's story, as told during the Gillette/Brown murder trial, narrated the seduction, betrayal, and ruin of a country-bred innocent, a plot consistent with the dire prediction of the *Factory Girls Album* but with an even more terrible end.

Brown was born on a farm in South Otselic, New York, in 1887. Though it was neither so poor nor so desolate as Dreiser describes it in *An American Tragedy*, Brown still found it economically necessary to go to work in the Gillette Skirt Factory in the fall of 1904. Her father, once the owner of the farm, had become a tenant, and this may have been a factor in her decision to leave. As home manufacturing declined, unemployed daughters on small or tenant farms drew on family resources while contributing little to income. The depleted farms of New York added their share to the migration of women to urban industrial centers. In Cortland, Grace Brown boarded with her sister and brother-in-law, the Hawleys, and was soon after hired by Noah Gillette to work in his newly modernized factory three blocks away. Starting out in a series of low-skilled jobs, Brown quickly worked her way up to inspector; later, she filled in for a number of other workers who

were on vacation and in this way learned how to perform many of the jobs at the factory (Brandon 56).

In March 1905, Chester Gillette arrived from Illinois to take a position in the factory. Like Grace, he worked at a number of different jobs until he found a permanent place in the stock room. According to Brandon, Noah Gillette believed in hiring relatives; his nephew Chester was related to at least half a dozen of his co-workers. Although he never made more than ten dollars a week in his short career there, he was still, as a Gillette, treated differently from the other workers; he was regarded as superior in rank to the operatives and unattainable by most of the women. Nevertheless, Grace Brown and Chester Gillette were often seen together, according to the testimony of co-workers during the trial. Although (contrary to later versions of the story) there were no rules prohibiting Gillette from dating factory workers, both Gillette and Brown were warned by friends of the possible consequences of their relationship. Both continued to see each other, though after work they visited only at her sister's and never went out together. Gillette was also seeing a number of other women, most of them better placed than Grace socially, but none so fabulously rich as Dreiser's Sondra Finchley, and most of them unaware of his relationship with Brown. When Grace Brown's body was found in the remote South Bay area of Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks on July 12, 1906, Chester Gillette was arrested, tried, and convicted of her murder. These details of their brief relationship (about fifteen months) exemplify Dreiser's paradigm: a working-class woman fixes her hopes for a better life on an upwardly-mobile man. The man, however, wishes to marry a woman of the class he desires to enter and will not marry the working-class woman when she becomes pregnant. The conflict is exacerbated by the social and reproductive codes of the time: a woman like Grace Brown—an unmarried mother—would have great difficulty finding work because of her alleged "bad character" and would also be considered morally unfit by most other men she might wish to marry. Consequently, her survival and that of her child depended on marriage to the baby's father. Shortly before her death, Grace Brown sent a series of letters from her home in South Otselic to Gillette in Cortland, desperately imploring him to come and marry her as he had promised. These letters became a centerpiece of the subsequent trial, and parts of them were widely published in newspapers across the country ("Grace Brown's Letters"). It was on their alleged "wedding trip" to the Adirondacks that the drowning occurred, when—to use Dreiser's paradigm—the conflict of hopes and desires became bloody.

Trials both reconfirm the boundaries of the social order and point to those desires which must be suppressed to maintain that order. Gil-

lette had violated domestic and reproductive codes by impregnating a single woman and then failing to marry her. Brandon writes, "The dual names on the hotel register showed that Grace and Chester had shared a room together, perhaps as much a crime as murder to the rural residents of Herkimer County" (193). Pre-trial publicity had generated great public indignation toward Gillette. Albert M. Mills, Gillette's court-appointed attorney, told the *Utica Herald-Dispatch*, "To my mind the press has rendered it practically impossible for an impartial jury to be secured in this county" (qtd. in Brandon 171). The district attorney's office had been leaking evidence since July; the newspapers had seized on every word. One hundred and fifty jurors were called in late October 1906, in the hope that a dozen could be found with an open mind.

In prosecuting the case, District Attorney Ward appears to have had two primary rhetorical objectives: to play on the class antagonisms of the jury toward the wealthy and locally powerful Gillette family, and to construct Grace Brown's subjectivity according to popular—predominantly nineteenth-century—notions of femininity. This second objective was particularly crucial, as Brown could easily have been represented as a "bad girl" by the same set of conventions; Ward's intent was to so polarize the characters in his narrative that the accused became an embodiment of almost pure evil and the victim became an angel with wings, if very little agency. In the absence of any but circumstantial evidence, Ward relied on the sympathy of the jurors (most of whom were farmers, like Frank Brown, and several of whom had daughters who worked in the nearby factories) and the persuasiveness of his rhetoric to win a conviction.

To accomplish his first objective, Ward repeatedly drew the jury's attention to the class differences between Brown and Gillette, referring to Brown as a "poor farmer's daughter" on a number of occasions. He also emphasized the disparity in status between Brown and the women of the social circle in which Gillette had been moving. This group revolved around students and faculty at the Cortland Normal School and included Harriet Benedict, the daughter of a prominent lawyer and the subject of much speculation—never proved—about a possible love triangle. Brandon notes that class distinctions in Cortland were clearly drawn in 1906 (342). While this circle was definitely not at the top of society and Grace Brown was not at the bottom, several degrees of difference nevertheless separated them. The *New York Times* described Ward's opening remarks to the jury:

> Grace Brown, he said, was the poor daughter of a hard-working farmer and went to Cortland to earn her living. There she met Gillette. . . . "In the meanwhile his uncle's

> position had admitted Gillette to a different sphere of society from that in which the factory girl moved. . . . The girl began to be a burden to him in his love affairs with other girls who did not have to work for a living." ("Surprise" 3)

Ward goes on to narrate the fatal boat trip, suggesting the callous indifference of the privileged toward the poor. He contrasts the comfort of Gillette, who brings the "toys of the society in which he was trying to move"—including a suitcase and a tennis racket—with the discomfort of Brown, repeatedly described as "poor" (which can be read as "pitiable" or as "economically deprived" or both), who brings nothing, not even her hat:

> "They embarked in a boat. . . . The poor girl left her hat on the hotel rack. Throughout the day they rowed around, he trying to find a place where none could see them. The lake was full of boats and all day they continued to row, the poor girl without any food or rest." ("Surprise" 3)

Cross-examining Gillette on November 29, 1906, Ward again suggested his motives were class based. The *New York Times* reported,

> Q.—Did you think it your duty to go over and marry her?
>
> A.—Yes.
>
> Q.—Why didn't you marry her?
>
> A.—I can't say.
>
> Q.—Didn't you think that other girls were better than she?
>
> A.—No.
>
> Gillette added that he had asked Grace Brown to a social affair, a "club picnic," but that "she wouldn't go." ("Grace Brown a Suicide" 1)

While District Attorney Ward appealed to class divisions when he addressed the jury and cited them as a motive for Gillette's alleged crime, he also stressed Brown's conformity to a socially acceptable feminine model. At the same time, he championed the single standard of sexual conduct, castigating Gillette for his transgression of it. By 1906, the efforts of women to bring about a single rather than a double standard of sexual behavior had made inroads in cultural ideology. This single standard defined a man who had violated the "purity" of a woman through sexual relations outside of the family as morally transgressive (Smith-Rosenberg 43). That this taboo was frequently ignored when the man came from a higher class than the woman was undoubtedly not lost on the jury, for Ward took every opportunity to point it out. Gillette stood accused of violating the patriarchal domestic order as well as of murdering an innocent young woman. By this cultural

code, Grace Brown was accorded little agency in or desire or responsibility for her sexual activity; Gillette was to blame. Ward portrayed her as an innocent in need of protection, a woman whose lack of familial supervision made her vulnerable to Gillette's advances. In his closing remarks, Ward said,

> [Gillette] entered the Cortland factory muscular and experienced. He takes front rank in the church; that's his mask, the lie he tells. He sought out the fair flower that came under his gaze at the mill, and one by one he plucked the petals until its pure life was gone—this inexperienced boy. And he comes with his wolf eyes and says—God save this word—I loved her. What perjury! ("Gillette Guilty" 1)

Of a letter in which Grace Brown had written, "I said 'No' so many times but the world will never know it," Ward commented,

> The world does know it, little girl, even if you had to sacrifice your life beneath the fangs of this monster to let the world find it out. This girl was as innocent the day she died as when she was born. ("Gillette Guilty" 1)

Ward was aware, of course, that Brown had violated sexual mores. Her pregnancy had been confirmed in court by doctors who had examined her corpse. But in order to win a conviction, particularly in a death penalty case, Ward had to demonize Gillette and exonerate Brown. The prosecutor offered a narrative in which there was a wolf and a lamb. The wolf was a "monster" with "fangs;" the lamb, pure as a newborn, conformed to a familiar model of femininity—childlike, self-sacrificing, vulnerable.

III. REPRESENTATIONS OF WORKING WOMEN, 1820-1925: GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND MIDDLE-CLASS ASPIRATIONS

Vulnerability, sexual innocence, depth of feeling and expression, need for familial protection, limited agency—these were ascribed to Grace Brown in the press and at the trial in 1906. They are consistent with constructions of female subjectivity and agency found in American gender ideologies articulated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These gender prescriptions, like the Horatio Alger trope, are integral to the "American Tragedy" narrative. Without this set of constraints on a woman's aspirations and behavior—sexual, social, familial, productive and reproductive—the victim would no doubt have had less need to depend upon a partner whose own ambitions were fundamentally at odds with hers; her material limits might have been less

likely to precipitate her death. Gender ideologies, however, did not remain constant but were consistently rearticulated, challenged, and revised. Consequently, the gender codes which informed the discourse of the Gillette/Brown trial had changed in some respects by the nineteen twenties, when Dreiser wrote *An American Tragedy,* and had changed again when later versions of the story were told. To read representations of crime and the law against gender codes, it is useful to identify some of those codes and explain how they changed and how they were articulated and disseminated at different times in American culture.

The effort to assign middle-class morality to factory women was evident as early as the 1830's. In such publications as *The Lowell Offering* and *The Voice of Industry,* working-class women repeatedly stressed their similarity to their bourgeois sisters in an attempt to combat the social stigma which often accompanied their work. Adherence to a middle class ideology of sexual conduct appeared to be one way of obtaining the respectability they desired; when some working women fell short of the prescribed code, their lapses were frequently attributed to poverty, undue influence, or the lack of parental restraint rather than to agency or desire. A "respectable" (i.e., upwardly mobile) woman simply did not engage in sexual activity for pleasure. In addition to providing a space in which factory women could redefine themselves, these publications, sometimes authored by the factory operatives themselves, were remarkable for their frequent articulations of gender/class connections which were voiced only sporadically for many years thereafter. Monogamy, as Friedrich Engels argues in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, is a material limit placed primarily on women in order to ensure the right of inheritance through a patriarchal line (735-41); but in the discourses addressed by and to factory women, female monogamy was a condition of upward class mobility.

The spread of industrialism in the nineteenth century affected women throughout society. Whether they worked long hours in a factory or were increasingly isolated at home, all were subjects of an ideology that preached new gender definitions for both men and women in accordance with the developing class structure and the growing split between work life and home life. As Foner explains,

> "The Lady" had always been the ideal for upper-class women. What was new was the possibility for middle-class women to aspire to the status formerly reserved for upper-class women. A lifestyle of genteel leisure became a status symbol and was held up as an ideal for all women, whether they could afford it or not. . . . Women of the

> growing wage work force would thus be looked down upon for having to work and were easily set apart by their dress, speech, and manners. (xxi)

This new ideology found support in the bourgeois "Cult of True Womanhood," which mandated the radical separation of private and public spheres. This separation was validated by the allegedly "natural" differences between the aggressive male and the nurturant female. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg notes, the female life cycle took place within two families—the family of her origin and the family in which she reproduced. Outside these boundaries, women had no legitimate sphere. Like Engels, Smith-Rosenberg observes that female sexuality alone is controlled; while men might safely exceed such boundaries, to do so would destroy a woman (43).

Those women who entered into domestic labor in households other than their own, such as maids and governesses, were nevertheless represented as safely within the boundaries of a family and subject to its rules. The nuclear, non-productive patriarchal family was defined as male-controlled, with wives and children subordinate to husbands and fathers. While the separation of public and private gave women a certain agency within the domestic sphere, they still had little voice or power in the public. This conception of a woman's role was essentially a middle-class phenomenon, to which factory workers, especially those who lived outside a family, remained marginal. In working women's publications, in moral and religious discourses, and in the rhetoric of reformers, then, equivalencies were being drawn between female chastity, domestic labor, patriarchal (i.e., male-dominated) family structure, and membership in the middle class. The rise of these prescriptions for women was concomitant with a rise in the numbers of them living and working outside the home. Competition with men for jobs, a declining birth rate, and anxiety surrounding the social and economic independence of women may have contributed to these ideological constructions. The prescriptions articulated, supported, and were shaped by economic and social practices at the time they appeared: low wages and usually low status for working women, patriarchal authority at work as well as at home, the definition of middle-class domesticity as the only "legitimate" occupation for the female gender. Enforced by publications for working women, these prescriptions combined to persuade their readers to aspire to the middle class.

Representations of working women both shaped and were shaped by the labor market and their material conditions within it. In the first half of the nineteenth century, vast industrial enterprises like the Lowell "City of Industry" specifically recruited women who lived outside the boundaries of a family, assuming that the absence of domestic

responsibilities would insure a greater commitment to the work. These women were required to live in company-owned dormitories, or "boarding house" complexes, where the corporation could supervise every aspect of their lives. These complexes were seen as a great benefit to the women—a kind of *in loco familiae*—and served to allay the fears of parents uneasy about sending their daughters into the labor market "unprotected." At the same time, the female operatives were seen as a temporary labor force; they would, it was assumed, eventually marry and leave the mills. This assumption was used to justify the lower wages as well as the restrictions imposed on their social and sexual behavior. The low wages and long hours, in turn, assured that many women would in fact escape the mills as soon as possible in favor of marriage. In this way industry reinforced the domestic and reproductive order and profited from it. Virtues of domesticity coincided with employers' interests in a dependable, docile, and cheap labor force and also with male workers' interest in attenuating the competition of women for the lowest-paying jobs, where women's ready availability reduced men's wages (Jensen and Davidson xiii). An unanticipated effect of the dormitory system was the opportunity it afforded women for collective action: worker-authored publications and women's labor unions were two results.

Despite the idealized model of the daughter who moves from the family of her birth to her husband's family, as Joanne Meyerowitz notes in *Women Adrift,* thousands of women continued to leave their homes because they needed to find work or because death or divorce had disrupted their families. They left because they had ambition or because they were restricted, abused, or unhappy at home. Depleted farms and the decline of home manufacturing, rape, pregnancy, or stigmatization for sexual activity all contributed to the growing numbers of women migrating to the cities (1-2). From the 1870's onward, "women adrift"—those living and working outside of families—became increasingly subject to public scrutiny. Declining birth rates, rising divorce rates, and increasing industrialization and urbanization all threatened the ideal of the middle-class family. Reformers, including activists in the organized boarding house movement (chief among them the YWCA), the antiprostitution campaign, journalists and social workers, turned their attention to working-class women living independently. These women must be helped to cultivate a domestic ideology which would return them to the home, reaffirm marriage, and, most importantly, preserve their chastity against the ravages of the city (temptation was rarely mentioned, as this ideology did not allow for female desire). What they most needed, in the absence of a family, was a "family-like" environment, complete with the supervision of a matron.

The subjects of the reformers' discourse were constructed as dependent, childlike, and passive, unable to protect or care for themselves. Organizations like the YWCA did, in fact, recognize some of the material hardships these women faced—low wages, long hours, seasonal unemployment, and loneliness. Their prescription was protection, not only to ease hardships but also to guide and restrain the women's sexual behavior. Many organizations offered supervised boarding houses, which provided religious training, lectures, classes in domestic skills, and other forms of "self improvement" consistent with middle-class values.

Underlying reformers' concern over female poverty was the possibility that women might sell or give away their chastity in the "struggle for existence." Meyerowitz shows that these concerns were similarly articulated in inexpensive "working girl" romance novels, which appeared in the late nineteenth century. The heroines of these novels typically set off to the cities in a spirit of adventure, proved inadequate at self-support (some never got around to finding jobs at all), endured many trials and dangers—both man-made and natural—spent the greatest portion of the novel defending their honor, and in the end either married happily or died, depending on whether or not they had broken the moral code (127). In short, the cure for the material hardships of "women adrift," in the discourse of reformers and of "working girl" novels, was upward mobility through marriage, via subscription to a middle-class ideology of gender and sexual conduct.

It is easy to locate Grace Brown's narrative within these ideologies, particularly as it was articulated by District Attorney Ward and much of the press. Later representations of her, while still somewhat informed by nineteenth-century models of femininity, increasingly depicted her as repressed, overly dependent, and at least partially responsible for her own victimization, consistent with twentieth-century gender prescriptions for women. The 1951 Paramount film, *A Place in the Sun*, for example, offered a quasi-Freudian characterization of Brown as both sexually repressed and sexually undesirable; this construction presumed a greater degree of agency than was attributed to Brown by Ward. In the courtroom in 1906, she was represented as childlike (Ward called her a "little girl") and incapable of self-protection, much the way reformers depicted working-class women of the period. Her letters to Gillette in the months before her death indicated a desire for marriage and a family in accordance with bourgeois prescriptions ("Grace Brown's Letters"). Both Gillette and Brown, in fact, appeared never to question the social order which eventually destroyed them both, although they transgressed it.

Though Grace lived in a "family-like" setting, first with her sister

and then at the Wheeler's boarding house, these homes did not prevent her from breaking the prevailing moral code. If it were not for District Attorney Ward, her story might have been told differently, as a cautionary tale for factory women unwary enough to be seduced, in which the penalty for transgressing sexual boundaries is death. Only Gillette's mother ventured this narrative, however, in a lecture tour to raise money for his appeal, and she did so to great public disapproval (Brandon 259-60). As Brown's pregnancy carried a strong possibility of stigma, Ward chose to focus instead on her familial role as beloved and innocent daughter, too ashamed to tell her parents that she had been "led astray." Wherever he could, he placed Brown firmly *within* patriarchal boundaries. The great success of this narrative, which not only exonerated but valorized a working-class woman who by nineteenth-century standards of sexual conduct might have been condemned, suggests important revisions in gender ideologies by 1906. Among these was the single standard. While the "Cult of True Womanhood" was still noticeably present in the discourse about the trial, rigid standards now governed male sexual conduct as well, standards which marked Gillette as a transgressor even had there been no murder.

Representations of working women changed, incrementally, from the eighteen-eighties to the nineteen-twenties, when Dreiser wrote *An American Tragedy*. Increasing numbers of women living and working outside the home, changing attitudes toward sexuality, and a growing market for publications aimed at the "new woman" contributed to this shift. American popular culture was one of the first media to articulate these new perceptions through novels, magazines, and movies. In the 1920's, novels and magazines focused on the newly overt sexuality of women; though they recognized a degree of agency and desire not afforded by nineteenth-century discourse, little (if any) attention was given to women's economic dependence as a basis for gender relations. Films began to depict self-supporting and openly sexual women who win men away from Victorian homebodies. Women were, however, frequently depicted as a threat to naive young men, an inversion of the nineteenth-century "working girl" trope. According to Meyerowitz, magazines aimed at a working-class female audience—*True Romances*, *Dream World*, *True Story Magazine, Real Love Magazine*—like their Victorian predecessors usually featured a white, native-born heroine who faces difficulties in the city and eventually marries the man she loves. The difference lay mainly in a new realism (heroines were often ordinary working women rather than heiresses) and in the competence of the women, who were portrayed as more courageous and ingenious than their predecessors. They attended

nightclubs and cabarets, sometimes engaged in premarital sex, and occasionally became prostitutes. A common theme in these stories was the bad girl redeemed by the love of a good man. While most of the stories continued to uphold an ideology of marriage and the family as the ultimate destination for women, the heroines were less often punished for sexual activity outside of the family (127-30).

It was in this cultural climate that *An American Tragedy* found immediate success. Twenty-five years earlier, Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* had been suppressed by its own publisher (Doubleday, Page and Co.) on the grounds that its young heroine went unpunished for her sexual behavior in pursuit of upward mobility. In *An American Tragedy*, the woman who clings to a nineteenth-century standard of marriage and the family is the one who dies. Commentators have observed that Dreiser either reproduced the "real" Grace Brown in his novel or else "simply passed along to readers of his novel the stereotypical Billy Brown the reporters had presented in the press" (Fishkin 10). It can be argued instead that the Grace Brown character (called Roberta Alden in the book) reproduced some of the constructions of her made by the prosecution and the press in 1906, but the novel challenges earlier depictions in a few important ways.

Dreiser portrays Grace Brown/Roberta Alden as highly conventional, as did District Attorney Ward, though not for the purpose of acclaiming her innocence. Dreiser—perhaps unaware of the real material hardships which faced unmarried mothers in 1906—in fact critiques her desire for marriage and middle-class "respectability." He writes of Roberta's friend, Grace Marr, that she,

> as well as Newton's wife, Mary, [was] of that type that here as elsewhere find the bulk of their social satisfaction in such small matters as relate to the organization of a small home, the establishing of its import and integrity in a petty and highly conventional neighborhood and the contemplation of life and comfort through the lens furnished by a highly sectarian creed. (*An American Tragedy* 253)

It is the women's desire for upward mobility via the route culturally prescribed for them—marginally middle-class domesticity—with which Dreiser finds fault. The ideology itself is unchallenged; Dreiser does not critique the social and gender codes which make marriage virtually the only way a woman like Roberta can advance economically and socially. Instead, these codes are mapped onto the aspirants and depicted as personal narrowness. This is in striking contrast to Dreiser's sympathy for Clyde and his understanding of the social codes which overdetermine Clyde's quest for upward mobility.

However, Dreiser is also sympathetic to Roberta because she,

like Clyde, is bound by class barriers. Initially, she leaves her hometown of Biltz partly because she is ambitious and partly because, as a factory worker, she is considered unmarriageable by many of the young men who interest her. In Lycurgus, however, she finds the boundaries dividing rich and poor even less permeable. She attends church, but the young people there do not consider her their equal and exclude her socially. While her aspirations are toward making a "respectable" marriage, she is limited to meeting only men who work in the factories, and most of these do not interest her. Roberta also recognizes the divisions which separate her from Clyde, to whom she is attracted, "for there was a local taboo in regard to factory girls aspiring toward or allowing themselves to become interested in their official superiors. Religious, moral, and reserved girls didn't do it" (255). She is in a double bind: she can't get what she wants without breaking the rules, and breaking the rules may make her less attractive to the person for whom she is breaking them. Roberta needs her respectability to qualify for middle-class domesticity, but that respectability is isolating. As lonely as Clyde, she is finally impelled toward him by her desire and her need for companionship. Their relationship seems almost inevitable, given the existing class structure.

Dreiser also accords Roberta a degree of agency and desire not found in previous representations of her. She quickly becomes dissatisfied with the surrogate "family" at her boarding house: "And so, once part and parcel of this household, Roberta found that it, if not Lycurgus, was narrow and restricted—not wholly unlike the narrow and restricted homes at Biltz" (253). She soon chafes at the "parental" supervision and devises ways to get around it, eventually taking a furnished room, which makes her even more available to Clyde. Dreiser's novel shows Roberta's economic and social aspirations, rather than her sexual desire, to be the cause of her murder. Chapters 20 and 21 of Book Two describe her conflict over whether to enter into a sexual relationship with Clyde:

> For here was true and poignant love, and in youth true and poignant love is difficult to withstand. Besides it was coupled with the most stirring and grandiose illusions in regard to Clyde's local material and social condition—illusions which had little to do with anything he had done to build up, but were based rather on conjecture and gossip over which he had no control. (301)

From the beginning, then, we see that Roberta's interest in Clyde is at least in part motivated by her hopes for upward mobility. While Dreiser represents Roberta as guilt-ridden because of her sexual desire, he does acknowledge that she feels desire, and this is an innovation in

representations of Brown: "The wonder and delight of a new and more intimate form of contact, of protest gainsaid, of scruples overcome!" (307). It is not her sexuality but rather Roberta's insistence on marriage that brings her into conflict with Clyde Griffith's own upwardly-mobile ambitions. Thus, ideological and cultural prescriptions for social advancement through marriage had different ramifications for men and women, and in American Tragedy narratives these codes place ambitious men in conflict with women of their own class.

Another significant issue raised by *An AmericanTragedy* is birth control and the right to abortions, which Dreiser saw as necessary for the sexual liberation of women. Chapter 37, for example, details Roberta's terrified attempt to obtain an abortion from a country doctor who is sympathetic but refuses. Her unplanned pregnancy intensifies the tensions between Roberta and Clyde and impels them toward the tragic conclusion.

To affirm Brown's autonomous sexuality would undoubtedly have been unthinkable in 1906; her subject position was represented as victim. By 1925, this construction was becoming outmoded. While gender prescriptions for women still tended to advocate marriage and the nuclear family, along with premarital chastity and monogamy—the "sexual revolution" was widely touted but not necessarily widely practiced—popular culture began to open up a space in which female agency and desire could be explored. Within this same space, Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* could challenge prevailing sexual mores and the American obsession with upward mobility, and the cultural phenomenon of American Tragedy murders could be defined.

Told from Grace Brown's perspective, the story of the poor working woman seduced, abandoned, and finally murdered by an ambitious man articulates deep anxieties surrounding white male power and privilege and reveals the violence which threatens women who move outside those boundaries. It is a cautionary tale for those who think about leaving to work outside the home or those who wish to marry outside of their class. It reveals societal ambivalence toward the increasing number of women entering the labor force and their changing role within the family. Told from Gillette's point of view, as Dreiser elected to do, it addresses the impermeability of class boundaries, the cost of upward mobility (when it can be achieved at all), and the impossibility of justice in a legal system rooted in class and privilege. Finally, it speaks to anxieties about the relations between men and women when ambition breaks the bonds of sexuality through violence. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss hypothesized that when a culture keeps telling different versions of the same story, it is attempting to resolve, on the symbolic level, issues which have not been

resolved in the collective experience. The American Tragedy story is one which was told and retold during the opening half of the twentieth century, and it continues to reappear at the close. Its core issues remain vital, often masked, still troubling.

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Dreiser's Song of Innocence and Experience: The Ur-Text of *Jennie Gerhardt*

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> In every voice; in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear
> —William Blake

The earliest extant version of *Jennie Gerhardt* is a holograph manuscript of thirty chapters. This ur-manuscript has the date January 6, 1901, inscribed at the head of its first chapter. By late March 1901 Dreiser had completed at least these thirty chapters of his second novel, which he then sent to the New York City office of Anna Mallon to be typed. A critical commonplace that has contributed to the general neglect of this lengthy text is that it is flawed in conception and characterization.[1] This view originated with Dreiser himself: in a well-known letter of April 16, 1901 to George P. Brett at Macmillan, he made a startling admission to this prospective publisher:

> I have already written more than forty chapters, but an error in character analysis makes me wish to throw aside everything from my fifteenth chapter on and rewrite it with a view to making it more truthful and appealing. I shall save considerable of that which is already done, but the new parts will necessitate three and perhaps four months additional labor.[2]

Dreiser never elaborated on the nature of the problem. Moreover, within a year of this statement he made significant changes in the first fourteen chapters as well as in those he mentioned to Brett. The commentators on the subject have assumed, nevertheless, that the revisions Dreiser made to the entire ur-manuscript specifically addressed—and redressed—the "error" alluded to in the letter to Brett.

Among the significant changes Dreiser made in his working text in 1902 was the deletion of the original chapters XX-XXIII, in which

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he had told the story of Jennie's first meeting with Lester Kane and the circumstances that led to her decision to live with him.[3] Chapter XXIII of this sequence is published here for the first time.[4] There are two reasons for doing so: first, to test the entrenched notion that the early manuscript of the novel is inferior to the revised version and, second, to stimulate interest in a neglected text.

I

Because Dreiser significantly altered the initial encounter between Jennie and Lester, a brief synopsis of the original story is needed to establish the context of Chapter XXIII. As in the novel published in 1911, the version of 1901 relies heavily on Dreiser's memories of his family. The German American Gerhardts of Columbus, Ohio, resemble—at least in broad outline—the Dreisers of Indiana. Dreiser made the Gerhardts into Lutherans, not Catholics, but Mr. Gerhardt is as sternly devoted to his church as was Dreiser's father. To the character of Mrs. Gerhardt, Dreiser brought his mother's malleable and sympathetic personality, as well as the harsh poverty and social marginality that confounded her and her American-born children. Genevieve, called Jennie, is one of six siblings born into a family that finds it hard to pay the grocer or keep the home fires burning without coal stolen from the train yards. She and her mother find menial work in Columbus's finest hotel, which Dreiser modeled on the Terre Haute House, a Gilded Age establishment that had fed the adolescent fantasies of his brothers Paul and Rome. Jennie's brother Sebastian (or Bass) gets in trouble with the law when he is caught tossing coal to the younger children.

After this point, the story line of the ur-manuscript differs significantly from the published novel. Bass is released with the help of an influential townsman to whom father Gerhardt appeals. Bass soon after gambles away his employer's money and sends Jennie to Senator Brander's hotel room to plead for help. That evening Brander, a lonely bachelor who has become infatuated with Jennie's youth and unaffected innocence, gives Bass the money he needs. Upon returning to the hotel room, he loses control of himself and makes love to Jennie. Shortly after, Brander dies of a heart attack, and Jennie discovers that she is pregnant. Forced from the house by her outraged father, she gives birth to a girl and moves with Bass to Cleveland. The rest of the family follows when she finds work in a factory. Before long, Gerhardt has an accident that disables him; Mrs. Gerhardt becomes seriously ill with pneumonia and requires medicine they cannot afford. Feeling that she is irretrievably ruined and a social outcast, Jennie in

desperation thinks of prostituting herself to help the family. At this point, Lester Kane, the flamboyant son of a wealthy Irish manufacturer, enters her life. At first he merely tries to seduce her, but, touched by her plight and her character, instead sets up a sort of common law marriage arrangement. Jennie can now provide for the family, offering her parents what they never have had before—a home and enough money to live comfortably.

Dreiser had taken the narrative to this point by late March 1901. In revising the text a year later, he deleted the account of Bass gambling his way into trouble, perhaps feeling that it was overlong and that it detracted from the main story. In place of this episode, Jennie herself seeks Brander's help when her brother is jailed for stealing coal. The Senator rescues Bass, with the same consequences for Jennie as in the first version.

In all this Jennie and Brander are not, as received opinion would have it, notably cruder characters in the 1901 text than in later versions. In the ur-manuscript and early typescript, Dreiser identified "the spirit of Jennie" with "the song of goodness" (III,1); we learn that "from her earliest youth, goodness and mercy had moulded her impulses" (III, 2); Brander at fifty-two is "essentially a good man" (XIII, 4) who feels "the drag of the unsatisfied"; exactly as in the published book, Brander flirts with Jennie and kisses her on the cheek in his room and Jennie responds to his overtures. A few changes are especially worth mentioning: a line in manuscript that Dreiser eventually deleted reads, "She was a strong woman in the emotional sense—too broad in her natural perception to be caught up in any little street corner affection with a boy of her own age" (ms, VI, 7). Dreiser also cut a carriage ride scene, in which Brander kisses Jennie affectionately and asks her to marry him and to allow him to send her to a seminary school. Finally, Jennie's seduction is almost identical to the scene in the published book and concludes with the same passage from "The English Jefferies." There is no reason to conclude, from the evidence of these chapters, that the Jennie of 1901 is notably more passive or vulgar than in later renditions of the story; nor is there reason to assume that Dreiser's characterization is at odds with the admirable woman she becomes in later chapters of the novel. To repeat: the essential differences between the ur-manuscript and the final version of the novel are, with regard to Jennie and Brander, differences in Dreiser's story line, not in his portrayal of character.[6] Dreiser's statement to Brett that he was satisfied with the first fourteen chapters therefore reflects the essential continuity of his conception of character in these chapters for over a decade.

As a result, the episodes with Brander were relatively easy to al-

ter. Dreiser had more trouble in revising the chapters dealing with the initial encounter and attraction between Jennie and Lester. Here we come to the heart of the problem that Dreiser expressed in his letter to Brett. Almost immediately after completing the ur-manuscript, Dreiser recognized—probably with the help of his wife Sara—that his portrayal of Lester and Jennie's relationship was veering dangerously close to material that publishers would find unacceptable. After his experience with *Sister Carrie* at Doubleday, Dreiser knew that for a publisher like Brett the idea of a novel in which the "virtuous" heroine thinks of prostitution as a way out of her troubles would be considered a gross "error in character analysis" on the author's part. Unfortunately, Dreiser's terse formulation of the problem has been taken at face value as a self-criticism. As a result, no attention has been given to the possibility that he was obliquely expressing his need to modify the portraits of Jennie and Lester to meet the demands of a conservative literary marketplace. A question might be asked about Dreiser's determination to rewrite his story: did he seek to make the text "more truthful and appealing" for himself or for a publisher like Brett?

What follows is an attempt to revisit the text of 1901 and to test the proposition that the ur-manuscript is a strong and realistic rendition of Dreiser's material. In a way, this complements the argument presented by James L. W. West III in the Pennsylvania Edition of *Jennie Gerhardt* (1992)—which demonstrates that the editing done at Harper's by Ripley Hitchcock and his editors resulted in a more sentimental novel than Dreiser had submitted to them. The evidence of the ur-manuscript suggests that this softening of the novel began in 1901 with Dreiser's internalization of—or at least submission to—many of the same editorial values.

II

Dreiser knew from the outset where he wanted his story to take Jennie and Lester: to the point at which the couple would establish a long and unconventional union, modeled on the affair of his sister Mame and Austin Brennan. The four 1901 chapters—XX-XXIII—that bring Jennie and Lester to that state differ dramatically, however, from his later rendition of the affair.

To understand Dreiser's original conception in these chapters, we must back up a bit—to the point at which the affair with Brander has concluded in his sudden death, followed by the birth of Vesta. The family's move to Cleveland results in a strained reconciliation between Jennie and her father. The group manages to keep the household solvent until Gerhardt's accident and Mrs. Gerhardt's sickness. Faced

with bills for food and rent, and especially with her mother's "pathetic disconsolateness, old clothes, worn slippers" (XX), Jennie is so distraught that the dark knowledge she had absorbed from her experience with Brander surfaces into her consciousness:

> The clouds of confusion died away and the crystals of thought were precipitated—clear, brilliant crystals that burned into her mind like fire. . . . "I am young. I am pretty. . . . Someone might help me for my prettiness." Clearly, sharply, with the lightning quality of jewels, these thoughts were formed out of the cloudy anguish of her mind. The lesson Brander's actions had taught her was coming back. Into the consciousness of her soul leaped the thought fully armed. The world would buy beauty. It could be induced to pay something for her soul. (XX, 10)

Dreiser here creates a modern song of innocence and experience, as he combines the possibility of prostitution with a sense that the real corruption lies in the social conditions and false ideals that can drive a good woman to this end: "Even a shadow of such an idea into a mind as pure as Jennie's was a scorching thing" (XXI,1). Jennie's decision is not made simply on the basis of material necessity. Although family needs motivate her to some form of action, Dreiser is clear that "the most powerful of all these urging forces was . . . the knowledge that she had sinned. . . . She had sinned, and now, as she revolved the difficulty in her mind, it struck her that she was guilty of having caused most of her family's misfortunes. If she had not erred, the little home at Columbus would perhaps never have been broken up. . . . She had heard it preached in her own household that a girl without original purity was a creature to be shunned and abhorred" (XXI, 1-2). Dreiser's early depiction of Jennie is therefore not that of a coarser, more self-centered woman than he later developed. She is instead the first of a long line of Dreiser characters (most notably, Clyde Griffiths) who are bound in the psychic chains of religious and social beliefs that distort the human spirit. It is Jennie's internalization of such imperatives that leads her to think of becoming, to borrow Stephen Crane's phrase for Maggie, "a girl of the painted cohorts of the city."[7]

This conception of Jennie helps shape the characterization of Lester and the key "seduction" scene of chapter XXIII. Lester is a rakish man-about-town who by chance first sees Jennie leaving her workplace, and he is so attracted to her that he tries to pick her up. He walks with her until they arrive within sight of her home. Because Jennie meets Lester when she is at a low point psychologically and is considering selling herself for her family's and her child's basic needs, she experiences her first meeting with him as "the very opportunity which

she had been subconsciously formulating, the chance which she had not dared to name herself" (XXI, 6). She also is vaguely aware of an attraction to Lester for more ordinary reasons: in his way, "he was paying court to her" (XXI, 7). Nevertheless, when confronted with his intensely physical presence and the reality of giving herself to him, she becomes sharply attuned to the complications of her inner life. She has her first experience of "the fear of life in general, of the great shadowy darkness in which the innocent only go forth to their danger, of man in his character of the uncertain stranger" (XXII, 4).

On this first meeting Lester surveys the poverty of Jennie's neighborhood and home, and he gives her ten dollars to buy medicine for her mother. She agrees to consider meeting him that evening after dinner, when she leaves the house to get the prescription. Chapter XXII is devoted to an internal debate over the consequences of such an action: "She could go to this stranger, it is true, but if she went it was with the full knowledge that she was yielding herself as a sacrifice to stress of circumstances, selling herself openly, body and soul" (XXII, 5). Dreiser does not sentimentalize self-sacrifice as the source of his heroine's appeal; rather, he has the narrator anticipate the Hobbesian argument against the purity of such self-sacrifice and then conclude with a hardheaded assessment that applies to Jennie's case:

> It has been asserted and can possibly be proved that the underlying substance of every sacrifice is, after all, selfishness; but, fortunately, the reward can not be shown to exist in any of the materials of life. There may be some spiritual aggrandizement; the heart may exult with a miser's pride in the evidence of good achieved, but, if so, it is not after all preservative of life. Physical destruction is the result of personal sacrifice. Self-annihilation is the end of any consuming love. Though a gain may be recorded, it is not of this world, and whosoever long persists in the policy of sacrifice is of the substance heavenly, and can not endure. (XXII, 4-5)

In this view, a kind of Dreiserian marriage of heaven and hell, there is no simple celebration of Jennie as a paragon of self-abnegation. The admirable element of self-sacrifice in her make-up is placed in tension with the potentially self-destructive aspect of that quality—something of which she is intuitively aware. In the end, her family's needs, a "touch of romance" (4), and a painful conviction of her sinfulness combine in no simple way to lead her to a decision: "she stood in the kitchen, her courage wavering and her eyes seeking the clock, until at last the hands pointing to five minutes to eight, she put on her jacket and hat and passed out" (XXII, 7).

Chapter XXIII picks up from this point and constitutes a significant alternative to the version Dreiser would later write. Here he creates a scene vaguely reminiscent of the famous restaurant scene between Carrie and Drouet. Lester takes Jennie to dinner; but instead of the restaurant in which Drouet lures Carrie with food, warmth, and the prospect of being seen amid the glitter of an exclusive public space, Lester leads Jennie to a more ominous "private-diningroom hotel, Bezenah's by name." This is a solidly constructed scene, embellished with a touch of oriental decadence, from the winged cast-iron lions that guard the entranceway to the detailed description of the inner sanctum in which waiters know to honor the time-worn cue not to return—"that will be all"—from the leisure-class lords of these solitary revels. Lester takes for granted that Jennie will be an easy mark, illustrating Dreiser's awareness of the prevailing cultural assumptions about class and sexuality. When Lester moves to a swift consummation of the relationship, however, those assumptions are challenged. Dreiser shows Jennie as "shaken by the greatest dread. Fear, shame . . . rushed upon her and, for a few moments, she wavered" (XXIII, 8-9). Jennie wavers but, unlike Carrie, finally does not "drift." Lester's response is to back off, surprised by the innocence of such a girl, only to find himself more intrigued by her.

Let's consider the differences between this scene and the meeting between Jennie and Lester in the published novel. Jennie no longer works in a factory, as she does in the 1901 version. Instead, Lester encounters her in Mrs. Bracebridge's home, where she serves as a maid. Their first significant exchange of words concludes with his seizing her "like a bird in the grasp of a cat," forcing a kiss on her, and saying, "We won't do any more of this here, but, remember, you belong to me."[6] In this way, Dreiser shifts the onus of the ensuing affair to the aggressive Lester—and makes Jennie a more passive receptor of male force. Gone is the more strenuous psychology of a woman who, in a pre-welfare state, has reluctantly accepted the guilty logic that selling her body is the surest way to aid her family. Gone also is much of the inner fear created by this situation. Jennie appears more innocently (and implausibly) to fall in love with Lester. Moreover, in the published novel nothing that precedes Lester's less-than-subtle overtures prepares us for this abrupt "seduction." Consequently, Lester's actions come dangerously close to being a caricature of sexual conquest.

In contrast, although the narrator in 1901 refers to him as "Machevellian" [sic] (XXVII, 1), Lester is less forceful than he would later be. Like Jennie, Lester wavers. He is here as much acted upon as master of the occasion. He is, that is to say, more consistent with the basically humane, mentally vacillating character that Dreiser would

develop in later chapters. A warning to the putative reader should be taken seriously: "those who are inclined to be radically intolerant of [Lester's] personality had best suspend judgment." Lester is here what he will remain famously throughout every revision Dreiser and his editors would make to the text: an example of a mind affected by

> the impact of materialized forces . . . [that] have so combined as to produce what may be termed a kaleidoscopic glitter which . . . produces a sort of intellectual fatigue. . . . It would not be too much to say that Lester Kane was, in a way, an example of the influence of this condition which we have described. He was a naturally observing mind. Rabelaisian in its strength and tendencies, but confused by the multiplicity of evidences of things. . . . Not a single idea of his, unless it was the need of being honest, was finally settled. In all other things, he wavered, questioned, procrastinated. (XXVI, 1-3)

As such a character, Lester moves erratically between his playboy tendencies and a genuine concern and increasing affection for Jennie. After they arrived at the restaurant, Lester is "ready to help her, truly, but he [is] also ready to sacrifice her to his desires if he might." By the time they leave Bezenah's, he is more eager to help Jennie than to exploit her. In a reversal of the old plot of seduction, Lester's sympathies broaden as, for the first time, he becomes aware through Jennie of the plight and resilience of the families of the working poor. Put another way, at the moment in the ur-text at which the seduction should take place, Lester instead experiences "the largest wave of feeling sweeping over him that he had yet experienced." Significantly, Lester is moved by the picture he gets of Jennie and her family as laborers—not by her sexual attractions: "by a reflection from her, he caught some of the import of the thing concerning which she could only feel, the meagerness of her subsistence, and the unprofitableness of her labor." In the process, he comes close to being a man of *sensibilite*. Finally, however, Dreiser resists making Lester into a sentimental figure; he retains a duality in Lester's character throughout the ur-manuscript. Although Lester's is "no cold ungenerous nature, seizing upon innocence wherever he might find it and bending it to his purposes and pleasures" (XXIV, 4), he nevertheless is not above making Jennie "feel the helplessness of her position" (XXVIII, 1) in order to fulfill his desires.

In these ur-chapters Lester is not a "wandering knight-errant, ready to come to the aid of distressed maidenhood with generous and unseeking service" (XXV, 1). Yet he is no more callous or self-serving than he is in chapters XVII-XIX of the published novel. In many ways, in fact, Lester is more self-centered and domineering in these pub-

lished chapters than he is in the ur-manuscript: "Marriage was not only impossible but unnecessary. He had only to say 'Come' and she must obey; it was her destiny" (Harper, 136). Against her protests, Lester says, "'You don't know me, but I like you. I'm crazy about you, that's all. You belong to me. Now listen. I'm going to have you' " (Harper, 139; Pennsylvania, 132). At one point Jennie says she cannot run off to live with him: "'You will! You will!' he exclaimed eagerly, the bare thought of his prize escaping him heightening his passion. 'You'll come to me.' And he drew her close in spite of all her protests" (Harper, 142; Pennsylvania, 135).

For obvious reasons, any comparison of the 1901 texts with the published novel has its limitations. The ur-manuscript and the early typescript are not finished works. Dreiser would have had to refine these chapters further for publication, just as he did those in his later manuscript and typescripts. In chapter XXIII, for example, a good editor would have questioned the likelihood of a man like Lester waiting in the night for Jennie to decide whether she would meet him. When it comes to the basic conception of character, however, there is a power and consistency in these early chapters that both differ from and rivals those of the published novel. There is also a mystery at the heart of the writing of 1901. It is difficult to understand from the extant manuscript what exactly Dreiser meant when he spoke of an "error in character analysis"—though, as I have suggested, his fear about the salability of his work was one likely factor in his decision to correct the "error" and make it more "appealing" to a publisher. The texts themselves do not yield easy answers. He did, after all, rewrite in the middle of a mental crisis. But he also let the wholesale revisions stand when he returned to the book years later. Does this mean that Dreiser in 1901 truly believed that his text was badly flawed? Or did he come to believe it by 1911? Or was he once again being practical in the face of publishing taboos that had not changed much in a decade? Whatever the case, in his worried state in 1901 he had written better than he knew. Readers must, of course, judge this for themselves on the basis of the evidence that remains. A good place to begin is the chapter that follows.[8]

Notes

1. For example, see Richard Lehan, *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1969; 1974), 84-85; Richard Lingeman, *Theodore Dreiser: At the Gates of the City, 1871-1907* (New York: Putnam, 1986), 335-38; Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1976), 100-103; James L. W. West III, ed., *Jennie Gerhardt* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992), 427.

2. Dreiser to George P. Brett, 16 April 1901, Macmillan Collection, New

York Public Library.

3. Given the length of time over which Dreiser wrote and rewrote the novel, and the consequent hiatuses and cannibalizations in the texts, it is not surprising that the major commentators on the book's textual history (see note 1, above) come to different conclusions. There is not space here to elaborate on the biographical and textual reasoning behind my conclusion that the revision of the 1901 text was made in the summer of 1902. Fortunately, the date of revision is irrelevant, since the argument in these pages has to do with a different issue: the quality and importance of the chapters written and emended in the first six months of 1901. For the purposes of this argument it only matters that revisions were indeed made—a fact on which there is universal agreement.

4. Since the chapter in the holograph ur-manuscript is missing two pages, the copy-text is the version of the chapter in a thirty-chapter typescript in the Theodore Dreiser Collection at the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library. This typescript essentially reproduces the holograph, including the first corrections and emendations Dreiser made to the ur-manuscript before the major revisions of 1902. Permission to publish the chapter has been granted by the University of Pennsylvania.

5. The ur-manuscript is more consistently realistic, but it does not follow that there is a difference in the essential nature of Brander and Jennie in the first third of the book. The argument for fundamental changes in the character of Brander needs to be reconsidered. Dreiser's earliest revision occurs in the holograph manuscript before he had it typed. Sometime between February and March 1901 he altered his story line. We see, in a fragment of a chapter that survives, that Brander initially does not die of heart failure. Instead he accepts a position as ambassador to Brazil. He and Jennie discuss his departure. Neither knows at this point that she is pregnant. He leaves her money and she agrees to write him. The narrator says of Brander that "It was his intent of sending for her." When she discovers her condition, she becomes depressed and decides to write to him. We learn that the letter was sent too late: "Before any answer could reach her, a climax was certain." Just before this fragment ends, Brander sends Jennie fifty dollars, but says nothing about her coming to him. The chapter breaks off at this point, and we never hear Brander's thoughts on this matter. In addition, there remains another fragment of three leaves in which Jennie's father is raging against Brander after hearing that Jennie was made pregnant by him—most of it identical to the raging that occurs in later versions. At one point, however, the passage reads, "'South America, eh,' he returned. 'South America! Huh! He shall let me see him sometime. I will choke his throat for him. Wait!'"

On the strength of these fragments, some commentators have argued that Brander callously abandons Jennie and runs off to South America. Dreiser's alteration of the plot seems, however, to have little to do with a desire to soften Brander's character—and more to do with getting him out of the way permanently in order to move Jennie towards her relationship with Lester. In the version he sent to the typist in the spring of 1901, Dreiser follows the seduction with a chapter in which Brander sets up a bank account for Jennie before he leaves for Washington to secure a position as an ambassador to Brazil. In good faith, he promises to take her with him and to provide for her family. (This

foreshadows what Lester in all versions would do—promise to keep Jennie and care for her family but not to marry her.) In this sequence, Brander dies before any of this can take place. This denouement did not change in the revisions over the next decade.

6. Theodore Dreiser, *Jennie Gerhardt* (New York: Harper, 1911), 130; see also *Jennie Gerhardt*, ed. James L. W. West III (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1992), 123. All citations from the published forms of the novel will be from these editions.

7. The question of prostitution in the ur-manuscript is complicated. Dreiser seems to have planned to save Jennie from the fate of a Maggie, but his heroine's inner resolve allows him to test some of the cultural assumptions about the prostitute found in the writing of his contemporaries. In *Girls Who Went Wrong: Prostitutes in American Fiction, 1885-1917* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1989), Laura Hapke identifies the ways in which writers of the period "desexualized" (3) the prostitute and either projected her as a "moral menace" (3) or "exaggerated her exploitation" (137) at the hands of lecherous men. In the ur-manuscript, Dreiser seems to have been on the verge of cutting through such stereotypes.

8. I wish to express my thanks to Clare Eby, Donald Pizer, and Jim West for reading an early draft of this essay and contributing many helpful suggestions.

CHAPTER XXIII

The night was quite dark and, since the hour of her homecoming, it had grown considerably colder. There was a chill fall crispness in the air, betiding a heavy frost, and along the wide street the gas-lamps receded in flickering lines. As she hurried to the gate and closed it softly after her, something of the uncertainty that was involved in what she was doing caused her to sink very markedly in spirit and yet she went on, her sense of the coming trial displacing every other feeling. How would she conduct herself if this stranger were really waiting, she asked. What could she have to say. She marvelled at herself as she proceeded, at the daring which carried her on.

When she reached the fatal corner she paused a moment, uncertain whether to go or stay, but her mind was soon made up for her, for now the figure of a man unloosed itself from the surrounding gloom and, having approached within a few paces, inquired:

"It's you, is it, Miss Gerhardt?"

"Yes," she replied, faintly.

"I hoped you would come," he continued, taking her by the arm and tossing a lighted cigar, still glowing, into the road.

"It's considerably colder. Suppose we take a car and go where we can be comfortable. It's a little too raw for strolling."

Although she had brought herself to this place and was, in a mute

way, willing to make friends with this well-speaking gentleman, all the way through she had been controlled by the feeling that she would only stay a little while to-night, long enough perhaps to give him the information about herself he seemed to desire, and yet short enough to have the prescriptions as an excuse. He would perhaps be willing to do this. Now she dreaded lest she might not be able to arrange things after all as she had fancied.

"I would," she said, weakly, too conscious of his recent generosity not to be apologetic, "only my mother is sick and I can't stay out very long. I'll have to go back as soon as I can."

"Oh, come now," he said genially, perfectly prepared to hear a protest of this sort. "You're not going to treat me like that, are you? It's early yet. You'll get back in time."

"It will be so hard for me to explain, if I'm out late," she pleaded. "I really can't stay very long."

"I won't want you to stay very long," he returned, reassuringly. "It's too cold to talk very much out here, though. It isn't pleasant for you. I'll see that you get back in time."

He led the way to the corner and Jennie, who was too troubled by conflicting emotions to be able to reason much about it, allowed him to put her aboard a passing car by which in a few minutes they were quickly transferred to the business heart.

Here, located on one of the side streets, was a combination restaurant, café, private-diningroom hotel, Bezenah's by name, which owed its excessively flourishing condition to just such a truce with the conventions as this companionship now represented. It was a handsome four-story structure of gray pressed brick and white stone, whose exterior at once bespoke for it the attention of all those who are gratified by luxurious ornamentation. Large plate-glass windows, backed from within by stained glass screens and lighted by incandescent lights in many ornamental designs, threw a glare of light upon the sidewalk in front. The principal doorway was covered by a large canopy of black wrought-iron and glass. A slender-winged lion of cast-iron was stationed on either side of the entrance, their long, black tongues lolling from their open jaws as if in derision of the in-passing, pleasure-loving throng.

Within, the ground floor was partitioned off by polished cherry into several compartments, the largest and most ornate being the diningroom proper; another, the café with its attendant bar; and a third, a spacious hall which was used for banquets, club dinners and the like. The second floor was in part devoted to a second or ladies diningroom, and the rest to a series of small private diningrooms, each set with a tale, four chairs, a settee, a divan, and hung with the pictures and curtains of a private chamber. The latter were at the service of guests who desired

them, a significant "that will be all," accompanied by a liberal donation to the waiter, being sufficient to insure, once the meal was served, a privacy which would not be disturbed unless an electric button, installed for that purpose, was rung.

It was to this restaurant that Lester now conducted Jennie, and it is significant that for the time being the large tragedy of her fate almost obscured the minor details which now confronted her. She saw the lights, it is true, the showiness of the furniture, and yet her thoughts of extricating herself and reaching home in time were so heavy upon her that the material richness was not much more than a blur. Lester ascended the stairs with her and they were seated in one of the private booths described, before the privacy of their relation came to have any significance. When it did, she only looked at her companion with appealing uncertainty, to which he returned a very genial smile.

"We'll order a little something," he said, "and then I'll have the pleasure of talking to you."

The details of this useless waste, as Jennie looked upon it, occupied him but a few moments, after which he turned to her with pleasant assurance.

"You're not feeling as badly as you were before, I hope."

Jennie lifted her eyes at this, the inexplicable nature of her case making her but a poor foil for his geniality.

"No," she replied in an effort to be agreeable.

He studied her over the table, the smoothness of her white cheeks, less beautifully rounded than they once had been, but still attractive, and the height of her brow with its thick waves of hair encroaching upon it, causing him to feel that she was very attractive. The smallness of her ears, the roundness of her arms, the fullness of her bust, all took his connoisseur's eye and he puzzled to know how she remained so unconsciously simple, so witless of her charms, as it were.

"She has a pretty mouth," he thought, and then said in a bantering tone:

"Look up! All the objects of interest are not on that side of the table. There are some here—one at least."

Jennie lifted her eyes and the unconscious innocence of their glance went through him like wine. He was ready to help her, truly, but he was also ready to sacrifice her to his desires if he might.

A slight delay was affected by the waiter returning with the food he had ordered, and after seeing it set upon the board, he was dismissed with a dollar tip and a significant "that will be all," after which Lester turned with hearty zeal to his conversation.

For a few minutes he attempted to continue in a gallant vein, but finding that her mood was still depressed, he was compelled to return to that original line of inquiry he had thought to make and found himself

asking her more about her family.

"Your father," he said, "what did you say he does?"

Jennie, whose mind had been heavily weighed upon by the previous tendency of his conversation, was slightly relieved by this change. She could talk about her family.

At least she could answer his questions in an honest frank way.

"He did work in a glass-factory," she replied, "but he burned his hands and he isn't doing anything now. "

"That's too bad," he said, not unconscious of the effort she was making to be agreeable. "Are they seriously hurt?"

"Oh, yes, sir," she replied, with innocent respectfulness in her tone. "He may never be able to use them any more. Two of the fingers of his left hand had to be taken off."

He noticed the "sir" and commented upon it.

The details of her father's condition modified his mood to one of unimpassioned sympathy, and he sat there for a time, the nature of the information he had thus far culled being anything but that of lightsome flirtation. Surely this was a curious experience for a man of his comfort and position to blunder into.

"You said something about your mother being ill," he began again, encouragingly. "What is the trouble with her?"

To Jennie there came back a vision of her mother as she had recently left her.

"She's not at all well," she replied. "The doctor thinks she has pneumonia."

He observed what a saddened tone her voice took on when she spoke of her mother.

"How many of you are there?" he questioned further.

"Seven."

"What does your oldest brother do?"

"He works in a hat store."

"This work that you do, what is it exactly?"

"It isn't anything very much. I sort and pack chemical instruments—assembling, they call it."

"What do they pay you a week?"

"Three dollars."

The simplicity of her replies struck him forcibly. He was a lover of that quality in women, and this sweetness of spirit retained under difficulty moved him in a very subtle way. He looked at her very intently and, as by a reflection from her, he caught some of the import of the thing concerning which she could only feel, the meagerness of her subsistence, the want of her family, her own insufficiency, and the unprofitableness of her labor.

"Don't feel badly," he said, the largest wave of feeling sweeping

over him that he had yet experienced. "You don't want to face these things in a spirit of despair. They'll come out all right."

He saw that she was not eating anything, had scarcely touched any of the excellent dishes he had ordered and, after urging her to eat more and receiving a negative, he arose and came around to the settee which was close by her side. He sat down and, after meditating a few moments, reached over and put his hand on her arm.

"Come over here, Jennie," he said, and drew her gently toward him, the motion being so insidious that she hardly realized what she was doing until she was on her feet. When she did, she hesitated, but he drew her steadily on, a dull fire glowing in his hazel eyes, and when she was close beside him, slipped his arm about her waist and drew her down.

"Sit here beside me," he said, huskily. "I think I have a plan for you."

As in a flash, the nature of his feeling came upon her; the grimness of his strength; the irresistableness of his passion; all the meaning of her adventure, in one blinding flash, and it took her strength away. Although she had come so far along the desperate road, had consciously risked, as it were, to yield herself, yet, now that the actual opportunity confronted her, she found herself shaken by the great dread. Fear, shame, the signal inability to explain or decide for those she had sought to aid, or even for herself, rushed upon her and, for a few moments, she wavered, helpless and apparently willing. Suddenly the expression of her weakest emotion returned, and she began to cry.

Shocked by the untoward effect his, to him, sympathetic passion had upon her, he now recovered enough from the dominance of her weaker characteristic, and sought to quiet her fears.

"You mustn't cry," he said sympathetically. And when he saw her emotional balance was not to be so easily recovered, uttered other words of consolation.

She searched her pocket for her handkerchief, but it was not there. He drew out his own and handed it to her.

"Don't cry," he added with this. "What makes you cry? Come, tell me. Don't you know how I feel for you?"

At this evidence of real sympathy, Jennie felt herself weaker than before and pressed her hands to her face, at which he looked on greatly disturbed.

"Won't you tell me?" he repeated.

During this constant reiteration, Jennie was really struggling with herself and, at last, managed to say: "I can't," at which he renewed his plea.

"Come, now," he murmured, his arm still about her waist, "you can try. What is it? I want to know."

"I—I—" she began, but seemed unable to get any farther.

"Yes?"

"I took your money because we needed it so," she sobbed, "but I—I oughtn't to do anything wrong."

She buried her face in her hands and shook anew, while he sat there surveying her as she bent forward from him, and revolving this astonishing confession, the simplicity and appealing truth of which had gone home like a shot.

"Took your money because we needed it," he revolved. "Oughtn't to do anything wrong."

For a time he could not have said why, but he felt rather upset by the plea. It was so helpless, so candid. It slowly operated to quell his other disturbances, and clear his vision for him so that he could see just what he was doing. It caused him to withdraw his arm and recover something of his intellectual meditativeness. He bent over her after a time and said:

"Don't cry, Jennie. You don't need to do anything wrong. I won't want you to. Dry your eyes now."

Then he looked at the heavily laden table and pondered her remark.

By dint of his calm assurance, she was restored to her normal mood after a time, and looked up, her cheeks a study in abnormal color. He admired the beauty of her tear-bright eyes but retained his calmer thoughtfulness and, when the situation warranted it, said with kindliest feeling:

"Now, I want you to sit down here at the table and tell me just how much money you need."

At this evidence of his remarkable change of mood, Jennie felt as if she had been guilty of some breach of faith with him, as if somehow her conduct had been most wretched. She tried to say that she was sorry, make some apology for her tears, protest against his doing anything more for her, but he was very emphatic about what he now wished her to do.

"You tell me how much," he said. "You don't want to let your mother suffer."

At this allusion to her mother, she felt more sensible of his purpose and came over, her face showing keenly the grateful disturbance she felt. Slowly, under his very intelligent and pointed prompting, she revealed how much was owing butcher and grocer, the sum of the rent bill which would fall due again on Saturday, the bill her father was owing for the dressing of his hand, all of which he mentally added and to it joined his own estimate of how much more would carry her through until possibly he should see her again. When he was through, he said:

"I'm going away tomorrow and I may not be back for a few

weeks. I'm going to help you until then, until I see what I can do."

Jennie's face again showed signs of protesting.

He reached into his pocket and drew forth a roll of bills from which he took off four tens without looking at them or lending any other disturbing consciousness to the act, and after rolling them up, pushed them toward her.

"Take them." He said.

"I don't need them," she pleaded.

"Here," he said, looking commandingly at her. "Give me your hand."

"You mustn't," she said. "It isn't right."

"Don't talk like that," he said. "Give me your hand. You'll have use enough for it."

He urged her in so commanding a way that she could not resist. Her hand was finally put forth and he placed the money in it.

"Don't give me so much, anyhow," she protested.

"Don't talk about it," he said. "Put it away."

She held it in her hand a while longer, but he would hear nothing more upon the subject.

He had a strong commanding way which brooked of no opposition. It was prideful at times, almost vainglorious, as if his opinion was final.

"Now, you must let me hear from you."

She had not written many letters in her life. It was something she could not do very well and she made no answer.

"Will you?" he said, commanding her with his eyes.

"I wouldn't know what to write," she faltered guiltily.

"Let me know how you are getting along," he said. "I want to know if you need anything."

He took out an envelope and wrote down several addresses with their corresponding dates. This he handed her and Jennie read it.

"You will write me now, will you?" he said.

"If you want me to," she replied, simply.

He arose and began to put on his overcoat. Outside, the street was running less thickly with people. He knew, from the manner in which the lights sparkled and the people hurried by shrugging, that it was getting colder. Her poor clothes became more apparent to him now than before. She ought to have better things than those, he thought.

He accompanied her to the corner where they had first parted and, after re-exacting her promise to write, bade her goodbye, the interest she had awakened in him causing him to pause reflectively after she had gone.

"What an exceptional girl she is," he thought. "Really, very strange."

Then he reached into his pocket for a cigar and retraced his steps to his hotel.

A Dreiser Checklist, 1993-1997

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This checklist supplements *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*, by Donald Pizer, Richard W. Dowell, and Frederic E. Rusch (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1991). It attempts to include all significant primary and secondary works published from 1993 through 1997. It does not include publications in which Dreiser is given only passing mention, nor does it include reviews of secondary sources. It represents the work of two persons. Shane Elder, a graduate-student at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, created the initial list. Stephen C. Brennan later created a separate list, reconciled the two, and edited the bibliography for publication.

In the interest of speedy publication, the editors of *Dreiser Studies* have decided to publish this update without annotations. An additional update in the next issue will bring the bibliography up through 1999. The bibliography will also be published on the society's website: http://www.uncwil.edu/dreiser/studies.htm.

For cross-referencing, each item in the checklist is preceded by an alphanumeric or numeric identifier that essentially follows the system used by Pizer, Dowell, and Rusch in *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*. For book reviews, cross-references are provided parenthetically after the title of the book being reviewed. For reprints and collections of essays, they follow the complete citation.

WRITINGS BY THEODORE DREISER

A. Books, Pamphlets, Leaflets, and Broadsides

1994

A94.1 Dreiser, Theodore. *Jennie Gerhardt*. Ed. James L.W. West III. New York: Penguin, 1994.

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1996

A96.1 Dreiser, Theodore. *The Color of a Great City.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1996.

A96.2 ---. *Dreiser's Russian Diary*. Ed. Thomas P. Riggio and James L. W. West III. U of Pennsylvania Dreiser Edition. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996.

1997

A97.1 Dreiser, Theodore. *A Hoosier Holiday*. Intro. Douglas Brinkley. Bloomington: U of Indiana P, 1997.

A97.2 ---. *Sister Carrie*. New York Public Library Collector's Series. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

A97.3 ---. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Modern Library, 1997.

A97.4 ---. *Sister Carrie; Jennie Gerhardt; Twelve Men*. New York: Library of America, 1997.

D. Miscellaneous Separate Publications

1993

D93.1 Dreiser, Theodore. *An American Tragedy*. With Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*. Cassette Tape. Salt Lake City: Inteliquest, 1993.

D93.2 ---. *An American Tragedy*. The World's 100 Greatest Books. Vol. 2. Cassette Tape. Salt Lake City: Inteliquest, 1993.

D93.3 ---. "From *Sister Carrie*." *Chicago Stories: Tales of the City*. Ed. John Miller and Genevieve Morgan. San Francisco: Chronicle, 1993.

1994

D94.1 Dreiser, Theodore. *Short Stories.* Introduction by Sherwood Anderson. New York: Dover, 1994. Contains "Free," "Nigger Jeff," "The Lost Phoebe," "The Second Choice," and "Married."

D94.2 ---. Introduction to *The Road to Buenos Ayres*, by Albert Londres. *Dreiser Studies* 25.2 (1994): 9-22.

D94.3 ---. "The Lost Phoebe." *The American Short Story: A Collection of the Best Known and Most Memorable Short Stories by the Great American Authors*. Ed. Thomas K. Parkes. New York: Galahad, 1994.

D94.4 ---. "The Lost Phoebe." *Great American Stories 2*. Ed. C. G. Draper. 2nd ed. Cassette tape. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.

D94.5 ---. "The Prince Who Was A Thief." *Once Upon A Crime: Historical Mysteries From Ellery Queen's Magazine*. Ed. Janet Hutchings. New York: St. Martin's, 1994.

1995

D95.1 Dreiser, Theodore. "The Homes of Longfellow." *Dreiser Studies* 26.2 (1995): 34-46.

1996

D96.1 Dreiser, Theodore. "Gold Teeth." *Dreiser Studies* 27.2 (1996): 8-21.

D96.2 ---. *Theodore Dreiser's* Ev'ry Month. Ed. Nancy Warner Barrineau. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996.

D96.3 ---. *Theodore Dreiser: Stories*. Ed. Prescott Hill. Great American Short Stories III. Belmont, CA: Lake Education, 1996. Contains "The Lost Phoebe," "The Cruise of the Idlewild," and "McEwen of the Shining Slave Makers."

E. Published Letters

1995

E95.1 Yvette Eastman. *Dearest Wilding: A Memoir, with Love Letters from Theodore Dreiser*. Ed. Thomas P. Riggio. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1995. 117-214.

G. Productions and Adaptations

G96.1 *A Place in the Sun*. Film. Dir. George Stevens. Hollywood: Paramount, 1996. Re-release of G51-2.

WRITINGS ABOUT THEODORE DREISER

1992

92.1 Bardeleben, Renate von. "Dreiser's English Virgil." *Literature im Kontext—Literature in Context. Festschrift für Horst W. Drescher zum Geburtstag.* Ed. Joachim Schwend, Susanne Hagemann, and Hermann Völkel. Scottish Studies 14. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1992. 345-71.

92.2 McCain, Terry James. "The Myth of the American Work Ethic: Sinclair, Dreiser, and Wright." Master's thesis, U of Waterloo, 1992.

92.3 Nathanson, Carol. "Anne Estelle Rice: Theodore Dreiser's 'Ellen Adams Wrynn.'" *Woman's Art Journal* 13.2 (1992-93): 3-11.

1993

93.1 Adams, Ray M. "Theodore Dreiser, Darwinism, and Literary Naturalism." Master's thesis, Southern Illinois U at Carbondale, 1993.

93.2 Banta, Martha. *Taylored Lives: Narrative Productions in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford.* Athens: U of Ohio P, 1993.

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Reviews

***The Collected Plays of Theodore Dreiser*, edited by Keith Newlin and Frederic E. Rusch. Albany, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing Co., 2000. 353 pp. Cloth $49.**

Although Dreiser was deeply interested in dramatic expression of various kinds from his early career as a newspaperman to his final years in Hollywood, he wrote all his plays during the relatively brief period of 1912 to 1916. There were several reasons for this burst of writing for the stage, but the principal one appears to have been his relationship with Kirah Markham, a young actress he met in Chicago in early 1912 and with whom he lived until 1916.

Keith Newlin and Frederic E. Rusch have collected and edited the twelve plays Dreiser wrote during this especially fecund phase of his career. As they note, Dreiser's work for the theater divides into two very different kinds of plays. *The Girl in the Coffin* and *The Hand of the Potter*, the most frequently produced Dreiser plays, are "realistic" in the sense that they are grounded in contemporary social issues and employ conventional stagecraft. His other ten plays, all one-acters and including the previously unpublished *The Dream*, are less plays of the "supernatural," as Dreiser described them, than works devoted to the dramatization of philosophical and abstract ideas with a heavy reliance on expressionistic and experimental theatrical devices.

The Collected Plays of Theodore Dreiser does not consist of a reprinting of standard previously published versions of Dreiser's plays, preceded by an interpretative introduction. It is rather a full scholarly edition, that is, an edition in which the editors have sought to examine all extant versions of each play, to describe the circumstances of the play's origin, composition, and production, and then to present each play in the form of an emended text accompanied by the textual introductions and notes necessary to explain and document the decisions which produced that text. In this effort the editors have been eminently successful. The term "definitive" is in bad odor among textual scholars, but it nevertheless can be usefully and properly applied to this edition.

Since much of the editors' efforts were devoted to establishing the

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text of Dreiser's plays, it is appropriate to describe their method. Despite the existence of many manuscript versions of Dreiser's plays, Newlin and Rusch decided to adopt as a copy text for each play not an early form, usually a holograph or typescript, but "a form that is closest to the setting copy Dreiser prepared for the book version of the play" (p. 286)—a form which for almost all the plays is the first impression of the first American edition in which the play appeared. Earlier versions of the play were then used to emend the copy text when evident transmission and sophistication errors were discovered in the copy text. In this practice, Newlin and Rusch are responsive to the shift away from the editorial orthodoxy of the 1950s and 1960s, an orthodoxy associated with the textual principles of Fredson Bowers and the textual practice of the early CEAA editions, which held that a copy text should be the text closest to the author's original expression. They have rather edited Dreiser's plays in response to the more recent position that the choice of a copy text should be based on the unique issues presented by each author and each text. In the case of Dreiser, whose habitual mode of writing was to view a work as in process until its publication, with both himself and others contributing to the process, the choice of a late rather than an early copy text is appropriate to this practice.

Now that Dreiser's plays are available in this excellent and authoritative edition, it is possible to take a fresh look at Dreiser as dramatist. Many questions still await examination, especially in the area of the relationship between Dreiser's writing for the theater and his other expression. For example, in what ways did his efforts to render the subconscious voice in his more experimental plays prefigure his portrayal of Clyde? And what connections are there between the philosophical ideas dramatized by the plays and his contemporaneous and later philosophical speculations? These and many other significant issues can now be more readily explored by means of *The Collected Plays of Theodore Dreiser*.

—Donald Pizer, Tulane University

***Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*. Edited by Donald Pizer. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998. xiv + 470 pp. Cloth $59.95.**

***The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism: Howells to London.* Edited by Donald Pizer. Cambridge University Press, 1995. xvi + 287 pp. Paper $29.95.**

Donald Pizer's *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism* is an "act of historical recovery" (xiv), expressly intended to comple-

ment George J. Becker's 1963 *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, the majority of whose essays are by Europeans. Pizer reprints thirty-eight essays by American writers that represent shifting concerns about realism and naturalism from the mid-1870s to the near present. The twenty-four essays in part one, "The Critical Debate, 1874-1950," fall into two subgroups, each with an extensive introduction: sixteen essays written between 1874 and 1914 and eight written between 1915 and 1950. The final fourteen essays, with their own introduction, make up part two, "Modern Academic Criticism, 1951-1995." Space does not permit even passing mention of all the pieces in this indispensable collection, so I will briefly summarize the issues addressed in each section, lingering only over the pieces most relevant to Dreiserians.

As Pizer points out, the early opponents and champions of realism and naturalism employed "a coded diction" (3) expressing conflicting values related to class, ethics, and sexual morality. The historian Laurence R. Vesey once called the late nineteenth century "the great age of moral homily," and readers will doubtlessly find rather quaint some of the moralistically coded assaults of the several genteel critics included in part one. A new "sensuous agency" has "infected the fineness" (21) of the novel's traditional idealism, bemoans George Parsons Lathrop in "The Novel and Its Future" (1874). Sniffing at the realist's "[m]ere transcription of facts" (23), Lathrop celebrates the "large poetic genius" that "look[s] into the roots of things, but . . . also highly appreciates the value of calm, unchanging heights, upon which to build securely and live happily" (24). An unhappy ending, admits Charles Dudley Warner in his 1883 article on "Modern Fiction," is acceptable in a "noble tragedy [that] lifts up our nature into a high plane of sacrifice and pathos" (40) but not in so-called "realism" that wallows in "the disagreeable, the vicious, the unwholesome" (41). What Dudley prefers above all is the "wholesome" ending that grants the "lovely heroine" a "blissful compensation of her troubles" (40).

In offering readers several full-length essays expressing this sort of moralistic idealism, Pizer supplies a valuable context for the defensive strategies of James, Howells, Garland, Norris, and Dreiser. Art and morality are closely allied, James asserts as he reluctantly takes up the moral question at the end of "The Art of Fiction" (1888), and the "essence of moral energy is to survey the whole field," to explore the totality of life and create the "perfect work," the "picture" that "partake[s] of the substance of beauty and truth" (58-59). Though he is conventionally viewed as James's antithesis, Dreiser might be paraphrasing The Master when, in "True Art Speaks Plainly" (1903), he calls for the artist to take as his subject "[t]he extent of all reality" and claims that "a true picture of life . . . is both moral and artistic" (180). Norris takes a very different tack in "A Plea for Romantic Fic-

tion" (1901). Joining critics like Lathrop in charging Howellsian realism with superficiality, Norris turns the genteel call for deep truth against itself. Naturalism does not photograph the "surface of things" (172), Norris asserts; it penetrates "the unplumbed depths of the human heart . . . and the unsearched penetralia of the soul of man" (174), thus ironically fulfilling one artistic function called for by the genteel critics while denying the necessity for moral uplift and the happy ending.

In the eight essays from the early modern period, 1915-1950, Dreiser is more often than other naturalists at the center of debate over the ethical and social implications of naturalism. This section begins by pairing Stuart P. Sherman's famous attack, "The Naturalism of Mr. Dreiser" (1915), with Randolph Bourne's lesser known "The Art of Theodore Dreiser" (1917). While Sherman finds in Dreiser a disturbing "'ethnic' element of our mixed population" (189) and a simpleminded "theory of animal behavior" (196), Bourne finds a "moral democrat" (199), a "true hyphenate" who, in making art out of "the chaotic materials that lie around us in American life" (200), represents the truly American spirit.

Essays by V. L. Parrington and Alfred Kazin recounting the rise of naturalism as an understandable if futile protest against American Puritanism, optimism, and brutalizing capitalism are followed by Malcolm Cowley's "Not Men" (1947) and Lionel Trilling's "Reality in America" (1950), both of which fault the naturalists for their lack of tragic vision and artistry. But while Cowley at least admits that Dreiser, "the worst writer of all," causes us to take his stylistic lapses as "a sign of authenticity" (238), Trilling uses Dreiser to denounce the efforts of liberal critics who, following Parrington, attempt to identify a clumsy style and intellectual vapidity with "reality." Dreiser is not colloquial, Trilling asserts, but "bookish; he is precisely literary in the bad sense . . . not only genteel but fancy," and his ideas are "not only foolish but vulgar" (247) in their mix of materialism and mysticism. In the essay concluding part one, James T. Farrell answers such "advocates of the new gentility" (259) by denying that naturalistic novels can be judged on the basis of their ideas. While mentioning Dreiser only in passing, he anticipates much recent criticism on Dreiser and other naturalists by treating all novels as the meeting ground of the reader's and writer's subjectivity. "I do not write novels to prove or disprove [the naturalistic explanation of life]," Farrell says of his own work. "I write novels to try to reveal what life seems to me to be like. I write novels as part of an attempt to explore the nature of experience" (257). Calling for a "free competition" (260) of novels for the interest and benefit of readers, Farrell attempts to free naturalism of the stigma of Marxism without abandoning an ethical stance on art.

Given the proliferation of academic criticism since 1950, part two necessarily offers only a small sampling of a few important critical approaches. Pizer addresses the problem of coverage by focusing on two major trends: the emphasis on "periodization" (264) in the three decades following World War II and the shift toward "cultural poetics" (267) that began in the late 1970s. In the work of Charles Child Walcutt, Richard Chase, Edwin Cady, and other critics represented here, Pizer sees an affirmation of American values characteristic of the postwar years as well as a New Critical emphasis on the formal unity of realistic and naturalistic works. The only essay in part two considering Dreiser at length is Pizer's own "American Literary Naturalism: The Example of Dreiser" (1997). Taking *Jennie Gerhardt* and *An American Tragedy* as his examples, Pizer argues that Dreiser's "infamous intellectual muddle" (347), a deterministic philosophy mixed with sympathy for the downtrodden and an aesthetic appreciation of life, is not a weakness but the very source of his strength. In each of these novels, he argues, we find not "an exercise in determinism" but "a subtle dramatization" of how a "distinctive temperament" interacts with a particular environment (353).

Of the six essays representing what Pizer calls "cultural poetics"—the so-called New Historicism with a poststructuralist bent—only those by Eric J. Sundquist and June Howard deal extensively with Dreiser. In "The Country of the Blue," the introduction to his influential 1982 collection *American Realism: New Essays*, Sundquist adopts Henry James's phrase for the isolated world of the artist's imagination to argue that American realists and naturalists failed to escape from "the bluest of countries, the country of American romance" (367). In Sundquist's view, "the age of realism in America is the age of the *romance of money*" (380). *Sister Carrie* deserves its "exemplary status in American realism" because in depicting Carrie as a woman so driven by desire as to merge herself with her possessions it challenges the realistic ideology of a stable self and thus "constantly veers toward romance" (381). June Howard, in excerpts from her 1985 *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism*, also treats the loss of selfhood, but she is more concerned with the "plot of decline" typified by Hurstwood. The "obsessive fear that haunts naturalism," Howard contends, is "*proletarianization*," the descent into the condition of the "brute," the stereotypical "Other" (395; Howard's emphasis). While middle-class readers tend at first to identify with Hurstwood's suffering, his degeneration carries him "beyond the reach of empathy" (400), and the very inevitability of his bitter end functions to "contain" the "threat" of proletarianization (401). What distinguishes Hurstwood from the brutes of Norris and London is the "imbecility and incomprehension" (401) rather than wolfish savagery that follow from his sinking into the bru-

talizing world of labor.

Documents of American Realism and Naturalism is a valuable resource; it would be even more valuable with one additional essay. The collection does contain pieces on race and ethnicity—an excerpt from Kenneth Warren's *Black and White Strangers: Race and American Literary Realism* (1993) that speaks to James's insensitivity to the plight of Southern blacks and Elizabeth Ammons's call for a multicultural approach to teaching the period in her 1995 "Expanding the Canon of American Realism." It does not, however, directly address the gender issues that troubled writers in the so-called "strenuous age."

Pizer's *Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism* does address these issues, among many others. It thus supplements the *Documents* well. Like other works in the series, the *Cambridge Companion* introduces students to its subject through original essays by noted scholars in the field. Following his introduction on "The Problem of Definition," which traces the history of the terms *realism* and *naturalism* and defends their usefulness, Pizer divides the eleven essays into three groups. In part one, "Historical Contexts," Louis J. Budd and Richard Lehan describe, respectively, the American and European backgrounds of realism and naturalism. In part two, "Contemporary Critical Issues," Michael Anesko discusses recent trends in criticism, and Elizabeth Ammons, in the essay reprinted in *Documents*, argues for an expanded, multicultural canon of realists to include such works as Charles Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman* and Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*. Part three, "Case Studies," offers seven essays on a wide range of works: John W. Crowley discusses *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Rise of Silas Lapham*; Tom Quirk, *Huckleberry Finn*; J. C. Levenson, *The Red Badge of Courage* and *McTeague*; Blanche Gelfant, *Sister Carrie* and Tim O'Brien's Vietnam War story "Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong"; Barbara Hochman, *The Awakening* and *The House of Mirth*; Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, *The Call of the Wild* and *The Jungle*; and Kenneth W. Warren, *The Souls of Black Folk* and *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*.

Gelfant's "What More Can Carrie Want? Naturalistic Ways of Consuming Women" is a tour de force that can be intimidating at first. To demonstrate the endless possibilities for new readings of *Sister Carrie*, Gelfant often departs from her main argument into discussions of American popular culture, semiotic theory, and a multitude of other subjects. Long discursive notes run to more than seventeen pages of small type (the essay itself takes up only fifteen pages). While many notes are fascinating mini-essays on behaviorism and advertising, the department store, Jane Fonda's workouts, and the like, they can sidetrack a reader.

Not that the main argument, lucid and interesting as it is, poses

problems. Taking "consumption" (178) as her focus, Gelfant first argues that Carrie Meeber reveals a "simple sequence of seeing, wanting, and buying [that] constitutes a deterministic structure of desire" (179) typical of modern consumer culture. Carrie, a desiring and consuming subject, finally becomes an object of others' desire when the blazoning of her name on Broadway fire-signs makes her "a fiery figure of consumption" (184). Turning to the O'Brien story, Gelfant, in a brilliant and cogent argument, demonstrates the same structure of desire in a poststructuralist tale set in the jungles of Vietnam. In an environment devoid of consumer goods, seventeen-year-old Mary Anne Bell, the sweetheart of an American soldier whom she is visiting, gazes on a new world and absorbs its values. Finally, burning with an insatiable desire to kill inculcated in her by the Green Berets, she is absorbed into the jungle just as Carrie is absorbed into the city. Thus, like *Sister Carrie*, "The Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong" demonstrates that "the place where determinism and desire intersect is the body of a gazing woman. The woman herself is a static figure, arrested in a pattern of desire, but she generates a vortex of forces that flow inexorably toward consumption and death" (192). If the yoking of two such seemingly different works seems strange, Gelfant concludes, we should remember that Vietnam, just as much as Carrie's Chicago and New York, was inextricably bound up with the ideology of late capitalism.

In this exemplary work of cultural poetics, Gelfant makes *Sister Carrie* speak eloquently for our own times. But at its appearance in 1900, Dreiser's novel was a barely felt birth-pang of a world just finding the power to be born while another world, represented by the literary jeremiads of Lathrop and other genteel critics, was not yet dead. Read consecutively, the *Documents* and the *Companion* constitute a fascinating tale of cultural transformation.

—Stephen C. Brennan, Louisiana State University in Shreveport

***The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*, by Richard Lehan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 307 pp. Cloth, $45; Paper, $17.95.**

Richard Lehan, whose critical study *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels* is of valued memory to this Dreiser autodidact, makes a more ambitious foray into cultural history with *The City in Literature*. Reading the real, historical city as a text and the literary texts representing the city side by side, as it were, Lehan has produced a highly engaging study, whose structural and conceptual framework is lucid and intellectually sound.

There have been a fair number of previous studies in this area,

such as Blanche Gelfant's *The American City Novel* (1954) and the British Marxist Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973). But Lehan brings to bear a different synthesis, one that does not quarrel with earlier studies but profits from them even as it goes its own way. He views the city in terms of its functions—as a commercial, industrial, or postindustrial entity. It is within these contexts that urban space is authentically defined and redefined, since the city is a changing rather than fixed realm. And as the physical city evolved, so did the way it was re-presented in literary terms, especially in the novel (289).

In the broad historical perspective, Lehan perceives the city as "the end product of the evolution of capitalism from commercialism, to mercantilism, to imperialism, to international capitalism, and other multinational corporations" (286). He finds that different literary forms dominate each of these historical strata: "Comic and romantic realism give us insights into the commercial city; naturalism and modernism into the industrial city; and post modernism into the postindustrial city" (289).

That is a bare-bones summary of what Lehan is up to, but the proof, of course, is in the pudding, not the recipe. His is a rich and savory one, though not all of the ingredients go down easily. For one thing, although a virtue of the book is the author's talent for lucid compression of complex arguments, he sometimes ventures into areas where condensation yields indigestible abstractions. Such is the case, at least for this reader, in the section on the postmodern where visions of Derrida, Saussure, Kuhn, and Bertalanffy dance in our heads.

Yet he cannot do otherwise, for his method is to use the postmodern literary theories to illuminate postmodern literary praxis—see his illuminating discussion of Thomas Pynchon and Paul Auster. Lehan offers a wide-ranging approach that folds not only literary texts and literary criticism but also the writings of philosophers, historians, and urbanologists into the batter.

In reading Dreiser, for example, Lehan articulates the well-known influence of Herbert Spencer on *Sister Carrie* in a fresh way. Thus, like Spencer's, Dreiser's world is one of physical limits—a world in which the self constantly tests such limits, a universe held in a process of expansion and contraction, which establishes the physical realm beyond which the individual, the crowd, the city, and even the world cannot go (201).

And so we have our "waif amid forces," our "atom in the city." Lehan makes a similarly insightful link between F. Scott Fitzgerald's reading of the city in *The Great Gatsby* and Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* and points to the nostalgia for the "dead Jeffersonian past" that inspires the novel. "Fitzgerald's city," he says, "looks simultaneously back to the frontier of Frederick Jackson Turner and to the waste-

land of T. S. Eliot" (209).

I found particularly arresting his discussion of Charles Dickens, who increasingly portrayed the commercial city as a dark place of waste and entropy, reaching a climax in *Our Mutual Friend* with "its derelict population living off offal and death" (65). He devotes valuable discussion time to the detective, a recurring figure in urban fiction, exemplified by Sherlock Holmes, and to the persistent re-emergence of what Freud dubbed "the uncanny." Reading Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Lehan discerns the forbidden primitive lying beneath the surface of rational urban consciousness.

He sums up the ambivalent role of the city in Western culture as "an energy system that brings into being the fruits of Enlightenment commercialism and of industrial capitalism—at the same time that it feeds destructively off the natural world, leaving behind enormous waste. In its size and anonymity, the city allows the flowering of vividly personal sensitivities, which explains why one feels at once aroused by the city and submerged and powerless in its vastness" (273). The city from its earliest incarnations has been usurper of the land, substituting the commercial nexus for ties of community.

What is next for the city novel? Lehan ventures no prophecies but one wonders if the archetypal characters and forms of the various strata of Western city novels are being repeated in those of the Third World, where we see the poor and wretched being cast off the land and flocking into overcrowded cities (over half the world's population—3.3 billion people—will live in cities by 2006, Lehan soberingly notes). Lehan's survey of urban fictions indicates that, historically, the portrayal of the modern city in the Western novel has been largely a pessimistic one of "an energy system that worked either toward its own destruction or toward totalitarian ends" (262).

—Richard Lingeman, *The Nation*

News & Notes

NEW BOOKS: **Donald Oakes** has just published an edition of Arthur Henry's *The House in the Woods*, with an extensive afterword and a preface by Neda Westlake. The book is available from Black Dome Press (800-513-9013), http://www.blackdomepress.com). **Laura Hapke**'s *Labor's Texts: The Worker in American Fiction* (Rutger's University Press, February 2001) contains extended discussions of *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy* within the context of American working-class history. Also forthcoming in 2001 is **Richard Lehan**'s *Sister Carrie*, volume 7 in the Literary Masterpieces series from the Gale Group.

***DREISER STUDIES* ON LINE**: The journal will soon be available in full-text form on EBSCOhost databases, accessible through most libraries. *Dreiser Studies* will continue to be published in paper form; we have simply licensed the content to appear simultaneously on EBSCOhost. The issues available on line are from volume 28 (Spring 1997) to the present.

THE DREISER SOCIETY will host two sessions at the American Literature Association Annual Conference in Cambridge, MA, on May 24-27, 2001. For further information, please consult the Society web site: http://www.uncwil.edu/dreiser/ or the American Literature Association web site: http://americanliterature.org.

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